



The South India CHURCHMAN

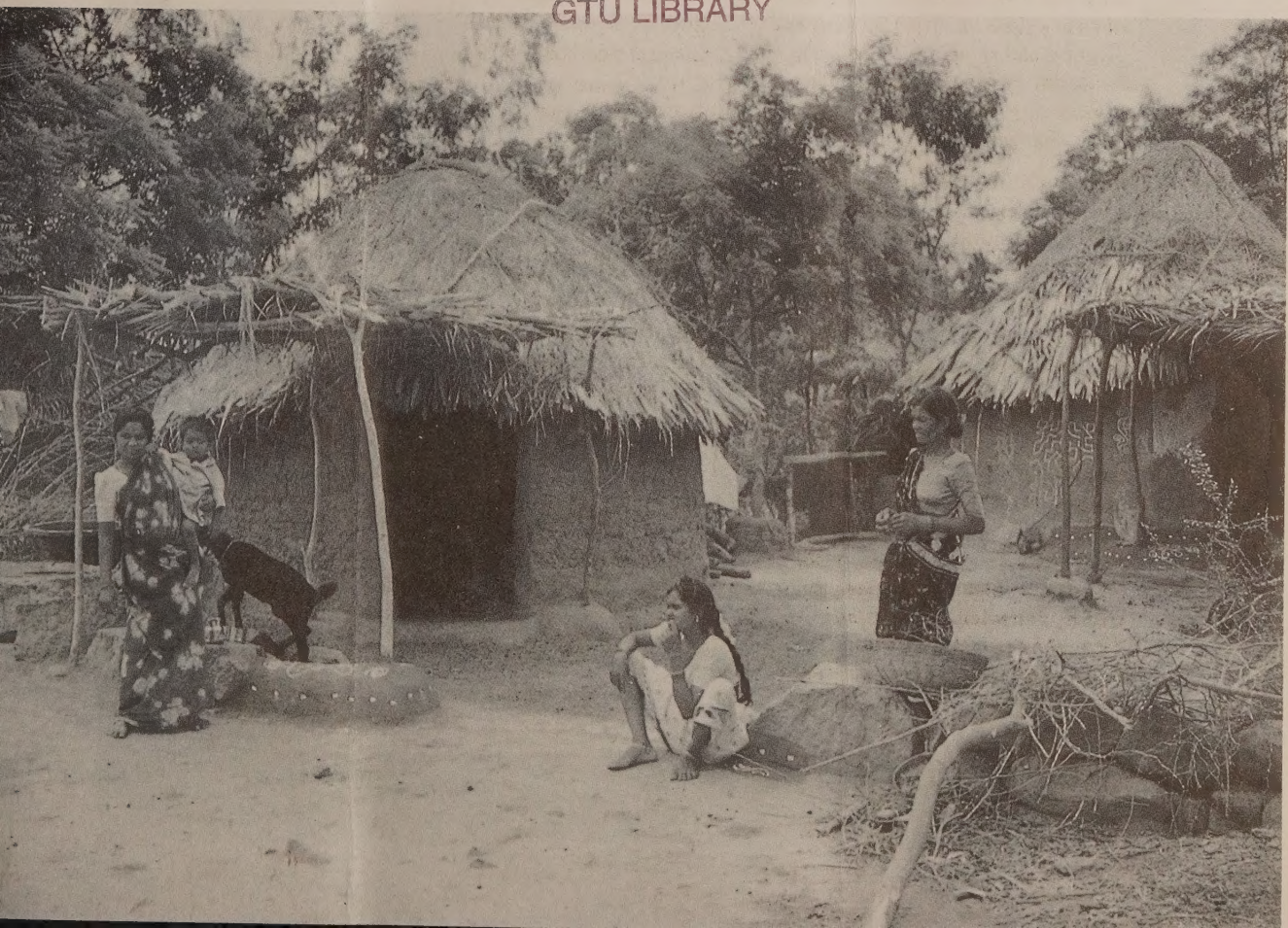
The Magazine of the Church of South India

MAY 2000

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THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH
MAY 2000

Rights are something other people grant you after you've fought tooth and nail for them. (*Brendan Francis*)

When people begin to ignore human dignity, it will not be long before they begin to ignore human rights. (*G.K. Chesterton*)

Wherever there is a human being, I see God-given rights inherent in that being, whatever may be the sex or complexion. (*William L. Garrison*)

Be as beneficent as the sun or the sea, but if your rights as a rational being are trenced on, die in the first inch of your territory. (*Ralph Waldo Emerson*)

Justice impels us to desire and to insist that everyone receives what we all have a right to. The Christian is a witness and an apostle of justice in the world. He cannot bear any form of inequality, oppression or tyranny. (*Max Thurian*)

No one can be perfectly free till all are free; no one can be perfectly moral till all are moral; no one can be perfectly happy till all are happy. (*Herbert Spencer*)

I cannot bear the universal categorisation of human beings: 'bourgeois', 'bolshevist', 'capitalist', 'nigger', 'hippie', 'pig', 'imperialist'. The one so labelled may be reviled, imprisoned, tortured, killed or exiled because he is no longer a human being, but a symbol. He does not bleed when pricked; his heart does not cry in the night. By this conjuring trick, conscience is made to disappear. It is, perhaps, the profoundest corruption of our time. (*Eric Severeid*)

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THE SOUTH INDIA
CHURCHMAN

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MAY 2000

Editor

Rev. C. V. Theodore
C.S.I. Centre
5, Whites Road
Royapettah
Chennai - 600 014
Phone : 852 1566 / 858 9561
Fax : 91-44-852-3528
E-Mail: <csi@vsnl.com>
Website: csisynod.org

Business Manager

Rev. G. Dyvasirvadam
General Secretary - CSI
C.S.I. Centre
5, Whites Road
Royapettah
Chennai - 600 014
Phone 852 1566

Hon. Agent in U.K.

Rev. R.J. Sleight
162, Sweetbrier lane
Heavitree, Exeter, Devon EX1 3DG, U.K.
Tel. No. (01392) 257692

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Minorities in Distress

Once again christians have been attacked in several places in U.P. It is sickening to see that these are recurring periodically and with a regular pattern. The attacks increase in number and ferocity close to festivals such as Easter and Christmas; it has become a routine thing for the government and the administration to trot out all too expected excuses of the involvement of rowdy elements in such attacks for purely personal and pecuniary gains. In the recent attacks there is another argument which is advanced, that of the involvement of the disgruntled elements who were denied admissions for their wards in the schools run by the christians. In Mathura a priest has been attacked and cash stolen; in Agra a christian group from A.P. has been attacked and scriptural material set on fire.

To say that there is nothing 'communal' in these attacks but only 'a law and order' problem is to be naïve and simplistic and exhibit the proverbial ostrich syndrome. How is it that all those attacked are christians if it was only a law and order problem? The reason is far too obvious for all to see. It is nothing but the consequence of the hate campaign carried on relentlessly by the saffron brigade such as the Bajrang Dal, VHP, The Hindu Jagran Manch and other majoritarian Hindutwa forces. These outfits which seem to enjoy immunity from the ruling BJP in Gujarat and U.P. are engaged in organising a systematic hate campaign against all minorities dubbing them as 'anti-nationals' who are out to destroy the nation through 'induced conversions - offering money'.

All these baseless allegations have never been substantiated. They cannot be for the simple reason they are

blatantly false. Their godfathers and mentors should realise no nation or civilization has ever been built or consolidated on the principle of hatred and it is only love and tolerance which can cement, sustain and consolidate communities and build a nation.

Christian Marriage Bill 2000

The Christian Marriage Act formulated during the British Rule is still in force in India today. It is amusing to see that even in England their law on marriage and divorce has been thoroughly revised and updated whereas in India the out-of-date Marriage Act of 1872 still governs christian marriage and related issues of divorce, succession and adoption. It has long been felt that a thorough revision of this act is called for in the light of the experiences and problems

A View from the Pew

faced in this area over the last several decades. For instance, the kind of remedy that is available for non-christian spouses in the case of irreconcilable break down of marriage is not available to christian spouses even though the issue is basically human and not communal or religious. For a long time there has been a debate over this issue and about 5 years ago christian representatives submitted a draft to the government.

The draft though is widely welcomed by many women's organizations as they feel that gender justice has been done at last in this very vital and sensitive issue. They feel all these years women have been at the receiving end and double standards have been maintained in favour of men; for instance a woman seeking divorce was called upon to prove that her spouse was guilty of adultery with

cruelty, impotence and so on whereas in the case of man it was enough to prove that the wife was adulterous; the woman was also discriminated against in the matter of matrimonial property and other rights.

While it is a good thing to know that a draft Marriage Bill 2000 is being brought forward in the Parliament for adoption what really bothers the christian community is the indecent haste with which it is sought to be pushed through, barely giving more than 10 days for the christian representatives to study the draft.

The fact is this draft takes away the freedom historically enjoyed by christians; as for instance if either the man or a woman was a christian and both wanted to have a church wedding it could be done. But in the present bill such couples will have to go in for marriage under the special marriage act. Severe restrictions have been placed on priests performing marriages in the church with penalties for violation of regulations going upto 10 years in prison and fines; and procedures have also been made more cumbersome; further the christian view of marriage is sacramental and not contractual whereas this bill tries to over secularize the concept of marriage; as a result of which some objections have been raised and it creates an unnecessary and unwarranted impression that the christian community is opposed to a progressive bill which is certainly not the case.

Christian community in India and anywhere else in the world has always been known for its progressive outlook but a bill of this import and nature certainly deserves to be studied in greater detail and leisure, looked at from all possible angles before it is adopted; No purpose can really be served if anything is done in haste.

A Word from your General Secretary

It is disheartening to hear of the terrible drought affecting several states in our country especially Rajasthan, Gujarat, Orissa and some pockets of Andhra Pradesh. Womenfolk have to trek several kilometers to fetch a pot of drinking water from dangerously deep wells that have almost gone dry and cattle have died in hordes! Though A.P. could supply water to Tamilnadu through Telugu Ganga it is heart-rending to see 20 farmers selling their kidneys in the midst of dire poverty. However, the church must also give serious thought on how she could become an agent in developing alternate water resources. The forthcoming bishop retreat I hope will address this issue in all seriousness.

The resumption of new life marked by the initiation of the diocesan mission festival in Krishna-Godavari diocese has also resulted in the commencement of construction of the commercial complex with the CWM grant. The Most Rev. Dr. K.J., Samuel, the Moderator, the Rt. Rev. Dr. Victor Premsagar, the Rt. Rev. T.B.D. Prakasa Rao, the Rt. Rev. S.J. Theodore, Mr. Frederick William, Hon. Treasurer and I participated in the turning the sod ceremony on the 6th May, 2000. The synod certainly is looking forward to seeing the construction of such complexes in other agreed places in different dioceses towards the visible expression of self-supportive initiatives.

The visit of Dr. Preman Niles to the synod centre on the 10th of May has cleared the pending mission support project fund towards the village community centres. In a month or two the construction of even these centres will be taken up at the guidance of the CSI Trust Association.

Ms. Lesslie Anne Morgan and Dr. John Party visited the synod on the 7th May, 2000 representing the United Reformed Church in England and Scotland whose visit would give us hope for exchange programs involving young persons between our churches.

The most important events of this month are the meetings of the presbyters of the North Kerala Diocese for 3 days during this month at the CSI centre and the bishops retreat to be held at Quiet Corner, Masanagudi near Ooty during May 23 - 25, with the theme: *Spirituality for our Times*.

Bishop S.K. Parmar, the resource person is a retired bishop from the Methodist church and chairman of the Timothy project. It is so meaningful for the presbyters of each diocese to come for a time of retreat and exposure outside the diocese once in a while towards gaining new insights.

The Moderator and I along with Preethi, a youth from the Karnataka Central diocese will be participating in the General



Assembly of the Christian Conference of Asia to be held in Tomohon, Indonesia from June 1 to 6. I shall not be here even the following weeks because of my participation in the general synod of the Reformed Church in America to be held in New York. I seek your earnest prayers for these two important international gatherings in which the CSI is participating as a member and partner respectively.

The long awaited department for Dalit and Adivasi concerns is all set for inauguration. The initial support has come from the World Alliance of Reformed Churches in Geneva and the assurance has been received from the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea.

The selection committee has been making all efforts to select a dynamic and committed person to give leadership to this vision of the church at the beginning of this new venture. It is not that the CSI has suddenly discovered a need of the dalits and the Adivasis. The Protestant Missions for the last 200 years have contributed so much for the transformation of the valleys and identity of these unfortunate broken communities. The vision of initiating such a department now is to cater to the needs of these communities exclusively towards empowerment, self-sufficiency and self-dignity. Because of the launching of this department it is hoped a new sense of 'dalit

consciousness' will be evoked that would liberate the dalits and the tribals from the 'wounded psyche'. This department further is aimed at not only revolutionizing but also reviving the church if it is to be an effective agent of justice and peace in the Indian context. It is further hoped that this 'culture of silence' will now be broken towards a better articulation of the pains and sorrows, the joys and fulfillments, the dreams and aspirations of the people who dream of a better world free from exploitation and humiliation. While the Diaconal Ministry will continue to empower the frustrated and dejected youth in general it is my earnest belief that this special ministry for the dalits will concentrate on the exclusive needs of these communities especially the women and girl children among them.

Last but not the least, the CSI centre has finally opened a canteen within the premises by way of providing better facilities for the inmates of the CSI guest house and visitors.

I am sure several of the presbyters must have joined the new parishes and I wish them a very meaningful ministry in the new congregations and I also seek the prayers of the entire church for these ministers.

The CSI mourns the demise on May 17, of the noneganarian former Archbishop of Canterbury **His Grace, The Most reverend Lord Donald Coggan** who was the Archbishop from 1974-1980. He visited India twice and was instrumental in giving recognition to the episcopacy of the CSI that resulted in the participation of all our bishops in Lambeth 1998. What Archbishop Donald specifically brought to his whole ministry was a passion for the mission and evangelism of the church and a preaching gift based on the Biblical exposition, being himself a Hebrew scholar. One more beneficial thing launched by Donald Coggan was the personal emergency fund to help families of pastors in the third world facing medical emergencies. This learned archbishop has been a bridge between the Anglo-Catholic tradition and the contemporary Evangelical movement. The CSI pays tribute to this great personality of yesteryears. Our prayers today are with his wife and the bereaved family.

- Rev. G. Dyvasirvadham

NATIONAL PUBLIC HEARING ON DALIT HUMAN RIGHTS

N. Paul Divakar*

"Ours is a battle not for wealth or for power. It is a battle for freedom. It is a battle for the reclamation of Human Personality." **Dr. B.R. Ambedkar.**

The Inaugural

The National Public Hearing on Dalit Human Rights under the auspices of the National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights was held on 18th and 19th April 2000, at Chennai. Justice K. Ramaswamy, Hon'ble Member, National Human Rights Commission delivered the inaugural address. The Justice dealt in detail the status of human rights and their violations on the Dalit community across the country today. He referred to the many cases being brought to the notice of the National Human rights Commission and reiterated the role and scope of the Commission in dealing with the issues.

Listening to the victims of the Kambalahalli carnage in Kolar district, Karnataka, the Hon'ble justice promised to take it up with the Commission and with the government. Smt. Veena Nayyar, Hon'ble Member, National commission for SC/ST giving the special address at the inaugural function and recounting the Human Rights violations against the Dalit community even after 52 years of independence said the nation owed an apology to the Dalit community. The National Public Hearing continued to hear 58 cases of Dalit Human Rights violation over the two days.

The National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights

The National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights was born out of a review of the implementation of the SC/ST Prevention of Atrocities Act, 1989 on the eve of the 50th anniversary of our independence and the 50th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1998. Dalit activists, both women and men, who have volunteered their time and energy, led the campaign at the national and state levels. Mr. Martin Macwan, a well-known activist from Gujarat is currently the National Convenor, ably supported by a team of co-convenors and secretaries. We solicit support and solidarity from all other movements such as women, labour, Human Rights, Peoples' Organisations and social institutions in the country. We further draw support from academics and intellectuals who work to protect and promote Dalit Human Rights.

The 1998 review and subsequent inquiry is witness to the dismal performance of the Indian state in protecting the Human Rights of the Dalit community despite many legal proclamations, mechanisms and institutions. The wider society actively perpetrates discriminations, untouchability practices and atrocities on Dalit communities, based on the caste system entrenched in the social fabric, system and psyche. Proclaiming Dalit rights as

Human Rights, the campaign gave the clarion call "*Let Us Cast Out Caste*".

The campaign is active in over 12 states and union territories organising mass awareness programmes, *padayatras*, signature campaigns, public meetings, seminars, literary meets and publications. 25 lakh signatures from across the country were submitted to the Hon'ble Prime Minister, Sri. A.B. Vajpayee at a Rally and Public meeting held on 9th December 1999 at New Delhi "*Black Paper - Broken Promises and Dalits Betrayed*" is an indictment of the Indian state's failure to fulfill its constitutional and legislative obligations in six focus areas. *Dalit Rights to livelihood, Education, Land & Labour, Reservation and Employment, Life security and Gender Equity.* The National Dalit Women's Conference at Delhi focussed on "*Towards Achieving Equality, Justice and Development* in December 1999.

NPH - Jury

The National Public Hearing presented 58 actual cases of violations, before a nine-member jury on the 18th and 19th April at Chennai. The jury consisted of eminent persons from the legal profession, academic world, writers and activists. The jury constituted themselves into two benches. Panel I was headed by Justice Punnaiah, former judge of AP High Court with members as Dr. Mohini Giri, former

* Secretary, Advocacy and Lobbying, National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights

Chairperson, National Commission for women, Prof. Kumud Pawde, Dalit woman writer, Ms. Sona Khan, Advocate, Supreme Court and Justice Amir Das, former Judge, Patna High Court.

Panel II was headed by Justice H. Suresh, former judge of Mumbai High court and the members were Dr. Vasanthi Devi, former vice-chancellor, M.S. University, Tamil Nadu; Ms. Rani Jethmalini, Advocate, Supreme Court; and Dr. R.K. Nayak, Founder and Director, NISWASS.

Selection of Cases

The 58 cases of violations came from the states of Kerala and Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Maharastra, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Gujarat, UP, Haryana and were categorised into 22 types in keeping with those identified in the SC/ST (Prevention of

Atrocity) Act, 1989 and everyday experiences of the Dalit community across the country.

They are actual cases and were referred by activists, lawyers or victims related to the case. For each case, victims or related persons were requested to depose before the jury. Notices were sent to state and central government, government departments, commissions and the accused to give their opinion and version, to ensure the fairness of the Hearing. The jury listened to the witnesses, examined them and related people before two packed halls in the World University Service Centre, at Chennai. It was a time of pain and pathos, anguish and anger and a testimony to the indomitable human spirit, thirsting for a social order of Equality, Justice and Peace. There was no doubt in the minds of those present that Dalits in this country are heralding the new millennium with courage,

commitment and hope.

The jury in particular listened to the cases of the Kambalahalli carnage in Kolar district, the status of reservation, the study of Human Rights violations of Dalits in Giyarath and to Mr. P. Sainath's deposition on Human Rights Violations on Dalits across the country.

The Verdict

Presenting the verdict on the 19th, the jury unequivocally condemned the continuing Human Rights violations on Dalits. Referring to the situation as "Hidden Apartheid" the jury placed the onus of the violations on the state and dominant caste nexus. Commenting on the triple burden of caste-class-gender on Dalit Women the jury noted that the landlords and police use sexual abuse and other forms of violence to inflict "Political lessons" on them and to crush any

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dissent. Dalits are threatened with physical abuse, assault, and death to intimidate their political participation. Dalits campaign for land reforms, minimum wages, reservation, and abolition of manual scavenging and *jogini* system also meet with similar fate. "In several cases that were deposed before us we found that for the Dalits, rights are non-existent or invisible to say the least. In several cases we heard it is the law of the upper castes that prevails and that state laws are subverted by the very authorities who are mandated and meant to enforce these laws. It is made evident by the depositions that none of the state have seriously implemented the SC/ST Prevention of Atrocities) Act".

The jury recognizing the colossal failure of the state in protecting Dalit rights noted:

- ☛ The state is continuing to perpetuate violence against Dalits.

- ☛ The state is colluding with the dominant castes in several areas.

- ☛ The state, by its inaction fails to implement all its laws and rules and to take stringent measures.

- ☛ The judiciary has not responded with adequate sensitivity and urgency.

Looking into the role of the police force the Jury:- "We are constrained to observe that instead of empowerment of the Dalits, the law enforcing machinery has become the great abuser of the human rights of Dalits. We found that in case after case the police

have actively colluded with the upper castes to perpetrate and perpetuate violence against Dalits and have failed to provide them adequate security against caste atrocities".

The jury made extensive observations on human rights violations of Dalits in the instances of manual scavenging, *Devadasi* system, Land alienation and land reforms, bonded labour and child labour, every day discrimination and untouchability practices, atrocities on Dalits elected to panchayats, social boycott, caste discrimination within prison walls, discrimination and bias in high places; denial of temple entry, brutal harassment and murder in inter-caste marriages.

In their recommendations the jury called upon the state both at centre and state levels to take up a massive campaign as a national priority against the caste system and untouchability as these are root causes for tensions, deprivations and violence, unbecoming of a civilized society. They said that both state and non state actors who perpetrate and collude with such violations, must be made to pay the price by stringent punishment by way of attachment of their property to state and the same allotted to the Dalits themselves.

The jury concluded that "the National Human Rights Commission as well as the UN General Assembly should recognise that caste, as an institution in itself is a source of gross violations of human rights. Therefore it must be treated on par with the existence and operation

of racism and apartheid. The fraternity, equality and dignity of every Indian citizen need to be protected. Dalits in particular should be brought into the national mainstream, to be the participants and beneficiaries of human rights as enshrined and mandated in and promised by the Constitution.

The Challenge

The National Public Hearing while witnessing to the continued violations on Dalit Communities, is also a challenge before the whole of society. Despite centuries of oppression, the Dalit communities continue to rise and fight, holding a mirror before us, foretelling the shadow of the patterns to emerge. We can heed the warnings and work together to *Cast out Caste* from our society or continue to deny the humanity of a fourth of our people.

The Indian Church offered one of the great escape routes for many Dalits from the wretched life under the caste system. Conversions have a social legacy in addition to the religious and the spiritual. We look upon the Indian Church for support and solidarity. Recognising that 90% of the Indian Church has its roots and spread among Dalit peoples, we realise the connectedness in our struggles. While the Church has raised the concerns of Dalit Christians, we entreat the solidarity of the Church in the concerns of the Dalit people beyond creed and religion; in keeping with its universal mission. Let us decide to bequeath equality, justice and peace, brotherhood and sisterhood to our future generations instead of caste and untouchability. ☘

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Human Rights for Dalits

The Lord judges in favour of the oppressed and gives them their rights. Psalms 103: 6

- HENRY THIAGARAJ *

Human Rights have been the pre-occupation of some urban elitist lawyers who were concerned with civil and political rights of some citizens. Many of the Western nations when speaking of Human Rights refer to the civil and political rights. Some leading Human Rights organisations like Amnesty International have been pre-occupied with the "State" violence and violations of Human Rights by the State, that is, violations committed by the police and the military, etc. Societal violence in a State was equally serious but was not taken up by many organisations, and upper caste elitists. Whenever the caste violence erupted in India, the standard method of treatment was to consider it as a local law and order problem - local communal problem. If it is raised in Parliament, the Home Minister would give a stereotyped reply that the matter had been referred to the State Government which deals with law and order problems. In these circumstances, the suffering of the Dalits who have been victims of violence over 2000 years of Indian history, who have been living in segregated housing and subject to inhuman discrimination based on untouchability went unnoticed in the world! Even the United Nations could not see this reality!

When the liberation theology became popular among the religious thinkers when the question of the poor became an important subject for deliberations, the liberation of the poor, the under-"class" became the pre-occupation of many theologians. These liberation theologians could not see the social disabili-

ties imposed by caste. When we talk about class we think of economic inequalities only. The social disabilities suffered by people on the basis of caste discrimination, violations under the caste systems were not taken up with the same seriousness, like the economic disabilities. Years of deliberations and research into the social disabilities went to prove that they required special attention both from social and political and also religious perspectives. This re-



search on the anguish of a suffering humanity, the Dalits in India, resulted in the emergence of Dalit theology and "the wounded psyche" of Dalits, a term which became famous by the Bible Study discourses of Bishop Azariah, who raised the issue of Dalit discrimination for the first time in the World Council of Churches in Vancouver in 1983. Church leaders, who were afraid to speak of the problems of Dalits, became bold and organised the Dalit Christians against the discrimination by the government despite the constitutional guarantee of religious freedom. In the Diocese of Madras, Bishop Sundar Clarke organised

rallies in support of the demand of Dalit Christians on Good Fridays. The All India Rally of Dalit Christians at the lawns of India Gate, Boat House of New Delhi, while Parliament was in session brought hundreds of thousands of Dalit Christians to demonstrate their solidarity and to demand their rights in August 1990.

The 50th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which was commemorated from 10.12.1998 to 10.12.1999, was preceded by celebrations of 50 years of Indian independence in August 1997. This was followed by 50th anniversary of the Republic of India in January 2000. Many scholars, economists have written and published well researched articles on the benefits of development not reaching the poorest of the poor, the Dalits, in reputed periodicals like *The Economic and Political Weekly* and National Dailies. The plight of the Dalits in India who

suffered both social and economic disabilities began to acquire special attention by development pundits. Many books were written highlighting the plight of the Dalits. Dr. John C.B. Webster's "The History of Dalit Christians in India", (ISPC, New Delhi) and "The Broken People" by Human Rights Watch, USA, have contributed greatly to understand the reality of the situation of the Dalits in India.

The Dalit Liberation Education Trust - (DLET) founded in 1985 is a pioneering institution which has brought the Human Rights perspective to the Dalit situation. The DLET highlighted the need

* Director, Dalit Liberation Education Trust, Chennai

to look into the societal violence of the Human Rights by taking it to the World Conference on Human Rights held in Vienna in June 1993. It took up the Dalit issues even before the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) was set up by the Government of India by an Act of Parliament. The DLET brought out a special document "The Wounded Society - the situation of Dalits in India" which was widely circulated in the World Conference on Human Rights, highlighting the sufferings of the dalits as follows: "Every hour two Dalits are assaulted! every day three Dalit women are raped! Two Dalits are murdered! Two Dalits houses are burnt in India." It also highlighted the need to adhere to Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which affirms freedom of belief and religion that a Dalit should have the right to choose his/her religion. It urged the Government of India to remove the discriminatory laws against Dalit Christians. The Dalit Liberation Education Trust's constant campaign against atrocities on Dalits in India made the Members of Parliament to lobby for effective implementation of the provisions of prevention of the atrocities act by the State Governments.

When the National Human Rights Commission was formed in 1994, the Dalit Liberation Education Trust promptly took up the case of societal violence of Dalits to be considered by the NHRC. The NHRC invited the DLET to jointly organise the National Conference on Societal Violence on SCs and STs in Chennai in August 1996. The proceedings of which have now been published as a book: "Human Rights of Dalits - Societal Violations" (Ed. Dr. R.M.Pal, Gyan Publishers, New Delhi.)

A small group of activists met to review the implementation of SC/ST Atrocities Act & Rules on 26 July 1998. The dismal performance of the Indian State in this regard called for pro-active initiatives on Dalit Human Rights on the

occasion of 50 years of Indian Independence and 50 years of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. A large gathering of Dalit activists from the four southern Indian States, a few from the northern state and some Dalit academicians took a collective decision at a consultation held on 10-11 October 1998 to launch a National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights. The deliberations covered the Campaign Manifesto on Dalit Human Rights, campaign programmes, and choice of State-level convenors of campaign committees.

The National Campaign for Dalit Human Rights started with the presentation of memorandum to the President on 10.12.1998 with several thousand signatures and ended on 10.12.1999 by presenting the memorandum to the Prime Minister with several lakh signatures to create a casteless society and to ensure the Rights of Dalits. The slogan *Dalit Rights is Human Rights* became popular! The two kits, the Campaign folder and the Black Paper (Broken Promises) brought out by the National Campaign made nation wide impact. It also conducted the National Public Hearing in Chennai on 18-19, April 2000. The jury headed by Justice Suresh, pronounced that caste discrimination is equal to racial discrimination and pleaded for the effective implementation of Protection of Civil Rights Act in the States.

On 20 December 1993, the UN General Assembly proclaimed the Third Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination (1994-2003). The World Council of Churches (WCC) has taken up the Dalit issues under item 6 of the agenda of the Human Rights Commission of the United Nations, which dealt with racism and racial discrimination and xenophobia. The UN's Special Rapporteur on Racism has included discrimination based on untouchability and caste under its purview and requested Government of India for clarifications.

The Special Rapporteur has also expressed a desire to visit India with the permission of the Government of India to study this matter in greater depth.

The International Year Against Racism-2001:

In 1998, the UN General Assembly decided to proclaim the International Year of Mobilization against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance in 2001. The United Nations is organising the World Conference against Racism in South Africa in 2001: The World Conference, intended to be action-oriented, will focus on practical steps to eradicate racism, including measures of prevention, education and protection. It will also endeavor to provide effective remedies for the victims of racism and racial discrimination. The United Nations has repeatedly affirmed its "special responsibility" for victims of racism and oppression. According to Mrs. Mary Robinson, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, "If the World Conference is to make a difference, it must not only raise awareness about the scourge of racism, but must also lead to positive actions at the national, regional and international levels that can bring relief to those who bear the brunt of racism and racial discrimination. This is a subject that requires firmness of resolve, disciplined and persistent action, and clear-sighted thinking." Most people agree, racists are not born, they develop, and a primary cause of racism is ignorance.

The UN Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, on the occasion of the observance of the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on 21 March 1999, said: "Ignorance and prejudice are the handmaidens of propaganda... Our mission, therefore, is to confront ignorance with knowledge, bigotry with tolerance, and isolation with the outstretched hand of generosity. Racism can, will and must be defeated."

It is in the above context the discrimi-

nation based on untouchability and the cruel system of discrimination based on caste acquires urgent attention. Most of the violence witnessed in southern districts of Tamil Nadu and some other parts of India come under the purview of racial discrimination. The racial discrimination is based on myths, prejudices and ignorance. Racism is a neurosis that has been allowed to affect the minds of human beings. Religious bigotry has fanned the spread of the neurosis for thousands of years that it has become a serious menace and a mental plague of humanity. The Nobel Laureate, and the Great Civil Rights leader of America, Dr Martin Luther King, Jr. once said: *"Justice denied anywhere is justice denied everywhere"*. As a Christian Pastor in the conservative Baptist belt of USA, Dr Martin Luther King, Jr. was a living example of what a Christian can do to remove injustice nation wide and brought non-violent social revolution to remove the segregation of the African - American people to the admiration of the world. He continues to inspire Christians all over the world through his writings, and speeches to establish justice for the oppressed.

A prophetic call to end oppression:

In the Bible, the prophetic tradition was always emphasised. The liberation of the oppressed and protecting the

rights of the marginalised, the stranger and the poor is an essential Judeo-Christian value and teaching. Oldest Prophets like Amos and Isaiah condemned injustices and oppression of their times. Prophet Isaiah spoke the word of God, when he said:

"The kind of fasting I want is this: Remove the chains of oppression and the yoke of injustice, and let the oppressed go free". (Isaiah Ch.58 - V.6)

"If you put an end to oppression, to every gesture of contempt, and to every evil word; if you give food to the hungry and satisfy those who are in need, then the darkness around you will turn to the brightness of noon. And I will always guide you and satisfy you with good things. I will keep you strong and well. You will be like a garden that has plenty of water, like a spring of water that never goes dry." (Isaiah Ch.58 -V.9)

The Prophetic Role and Christians:

The Churches in India should play a prophetic role in condemning injustices and the violence imposed on the oppressed people and those who suffer discrimination. It should be a challenge for every Christian, every pastor, and every church person to work to create a society free from caste discrimination. As we enter the third millenium in which we should fulfil the mission of Christ, to

love our neighbour, as explained in the parable of Good Samaritan and to create a world in which people can be free from prejudice and bigotry to express the love of God among the fellow human beings. The Kingdom of God in the third millennium will commence with giving justice to the oppressed and Human Rights for Dalits.

"As we see all around us, racism and racial discrimination continue unabated. Although we refer to our world as a global village, it is a world sadly lacking in the sense of closeness towards neighbour and community which the world village implies. In each region, and within all countries, there are problems stemming from either a lack of respect for, or lack of acceptance of, the inherent dignity and equality of all human beings. Our world is witness to serious ethnic conflicts; to discrimination against minorities, indigenous peoples and migrants workers; the accusation of institutionalized racism in police forces; harsh immigration and asylum policies; hate sites on the Internet and youth groups promoting intolerance and xenophobia." Ms.Mary Robinson, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

More Facilities at the Synod Secretariat

A long-felt need was fulfilled when the Deputy Moderator, The Rt.Rev.B.P Sugandhar declared open the Canteen at the secretariat complex in the august presence of the General Secretary Rev.G.Dyvasirvadam and the Hon.Treasurer Mr.Frederick William and other directors and staff on May 2, 2000. All these years the canteen functioned only when the meetings and programs were being held and on other days the visitors, staff and other guests had to go outside to quench their thirst and appease their hunger which was a great inconvenience to them all. The members of the staff heaved a great sigh of relief and profusely thanked the general secretary for his thoughtfulness in getting this long felt-need fulfilled. Now there is a full-fledged canteen functioning 24 hours a day every day!



The Deputy Moderator the Rt.Rev.B.P.Sugandhar dedicating the canteen to the glory of God and for the use of the people.

A Youth Response to Dalit Realities

Vinod Victor, Secretary, Synod Youth Department

Even as our nation boasts of its entry into the twenty first century, a cursory look at the living conditions of millions of Dalits in India would reveal the fact that the technological boom and the scientific advancement have not only made little impact on the lives of the millions of ordinary people in India but also their experiences of pain and agony remain unaddressed even today. Atrocities against the Dalits and tribals continue. Reported in the media and otherwise, the agonizing experiences of pathos through which the men and women of deprived communities go through, makes it imperative for the youth of the church to be able to take a bold stand as Dalits and for Dalits. The search for a theological base is in fact not very necessary since the very denial of human rights and negation of the possibility of enjoying the fullness of life is reason enough for us to involve and interfere. However a brief look at the following scriptural perspectives would strengthen our desire to participate in the Dalit struggle for the place due to them/us in the processes of history not merely as objects but as subjects. From being part of the subaltern today, we ought to reclaim the Dalit place in the 'mainstream' of history.

Creation Paradigm:

The Scripture is clear in that human beings were created in the image of God. (Gen 1:27). It was not surely an exclusive race that was created to share the image of God and the Dalit experience of oppression and marginalisation across the last many centuries were in fact blatant denial of their right for the *imago-dei*. Any denial of God's image can be related to sinfulness and thus the exploitation that communities went through were manifestations of the sinfulness that came into the life of God's creation. Reclaiming the image of God is an imperative of the Christian understanding of the reign of God that we long for and that calls us to be actively involved in all struggles for the restoration of the original glory of creation.

Liberation Paradigm:

The personhood of God that the Bible projects is that of one who is deeply concerned about the people in the peripheries and comes down to liberate them from their pathetic plights. In the Israelite experience of slavery in Egypt, God intervenes saying "I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of the slave drivers and I am concerned about their suffering. So I have come down to rescue them from the hands of the Egyptians and to bring

them out of the land into a good and spacious land..." (Ex 3:8f). When people are in pain God sees. That was why Hagar in the wilderness of helplessness called God *El Roi* (Gen 16:13) claiming that you are the God who sees me. The verbs that are used here reveal the very nature of God. I have *seen, heard, concerned, come down, to rescue, to bring them out*. It is this nature of God that was at its best in Jesus that must be revealed in the life and person of each of the disciples of Christ. That nature demands our seeing, our hearing, our going down, our involvement in the acts of rescuing and bringing people out of the bondage into which they are forced to.

Restoration Paradigm:

The Old Testament is replete with instances wherein the Israelites fell into exile. In the dungeons as exiled people (excluded too) they have often cried out to the Lord and many a prophetic message is the message of God's comfort wrapped in the assurance of Divine intervention for the restoration of the homeland for the people. In Ezekiel 34, to a people in exile in Babylon comes the assurance that God the good shepherd would search for the sheep and look after them. He would rescue them from the places to which they are scattered and bring them back to their own land. God would pasture them, tend them, feed them, bring back the strayed, bind up the injured and strengthen the weak. In the assurance of pasturing the sheep with justice God also proclaims that the sleek and the fat would be destroyed (v.11-19). Here again the expectation of God is clear. Where ever there is injury, people being pushed to experiences of slavery God understands the pathos, the inexplicable inner groaning and comes down to restore. The struggles for the Restoration of abundance of life to all, including the Dalits is thus the very nature of God's Restoring personhood and we cannot shy away as the disciples of Christ from this character that should be the core of our personality.

Messianic Paradigm:

The very incarnation wherein the Universal God took the particular form of a human was to be the panacea for the pain of the suffering people. Jesus the only begotten Son of God was sent in the extravangza of God's love for humanity that no one would be denied the possibility of abundant living. The marginalised of his day became the central figures of the ministry of Jesus. The Samaritan woman was the first to proclaim that Jesus was the Messiah. To the Jews who loathed the Samaritans

he presented the good Samaritan (Lk 10) as an example to emulate. The sinner and the tax collector who were despised in the society were not sent away by Jesus. Even the prostitute could find the way to fuller liberation in him. To ensure the ultimate triumph of the forces of life Jesus himself went through the pain and agony of rejection, unfair trials and public shame. He had compassion for all in need and restoration of life in abundance was the purpose for which he came, lived, died and rose again. The disciples of this Lord cannot stand back and be passive when human rights are denied, when Dalits are treated as lesser humans, when there is discrimination in the name of caste and birth. The cries of *Hosanna* (save now) is heard all over and our ears have to be open.

Eschatological Paradigm:

Even when there is traces of evil prevalent in the experiential realities, the hope that keeps the Christian life going is the hope of the Ultimate triumph of Light over all manifestations of darkness. Rev 21 envisages a new heaven and a new earth where all the tears are wiped off, and traces of death, mourning, crying and pain are not seen at all. The One seated on the throne then proclaims that I am making everything new (21:5). In this process of making everything new the remains of the old order are to be done away with. Tears, hunger, pain etc. are much more dalit realities than anything else. It is not just the pain experienced in the present but also the pain accumulated in the collective consciousness of generations. Even if in the conscious expressions, liberation is today possible for many in the collective sub-consciousness, it continues to be a distant reality. The real *eschaton* can come only when all pain is addressed to and that in itself is the clarion call for disciples of Christ to take the Dalit reality seriously. Dalit theologizing should primarily be a Dalit enterprise for outside the actual experience, theologizing in a vacuum would be empty. But involvement in the Dalit struggle for wholeness is a human involvement from which no well-meaning person can dodge.

A youth response to Dalit realities as/for Dalits should therefore become a critique of our passive youth fellowship meetings (indeed there are exceptions) and should be the starting point of our transformation into movements of young people. We would then be striving for the realization of the reign of God and expecting the barging in of God's rule into history. Our response to many similar issues would naturally follow suit.

How Free Are the Dalits?

The Facts You Knew and the Reality You did not Know

There was a National Public Hearing on the atrocities perpetrated on the dalits in Chennai in April, 2000 presided over by the former Supreme court Judge and an eminent jurist Mr.V.R.Krishna Iyer. The proceedings of this hearing has been published which is an eye-opener for all who have eyes to see and ears to hear.

Killing tigers was a past time of the kings of yore and Indian society's past time was to kill the dalits. But the times have now changed and the dalits have organized themselves and started retaliating in self-defence. And yet there are hundreds of atrocities that are perpetrated against them but the perpetrators still go scot free. That is the sad state of affairs in our country even after 50 years of independence.

It is taken for granted in our country that there is no justice or faith in the legal system or the police setup for those who have been 'untouchables' for centuries. Even today any uppercaste man can walk into a dalit village in Gujarat and the *Bimaru* states and rape a dalit woman with impunity. No police station will bother to record these cases or complaints. Even when the cases are recorded, action, if any, is never taken to bring the culprits to book.

Smita Narula of the Human Rights Watch in a recent publication *Broken People* compiled facts and figures illustrating the inhuman treatment meted out to the dalits, *Adivasis* and other backward classes which has roused the conscience of the world and these oppressed people to come together and voice their protests through rallies and publications. Their campaign literature has juxtaposed the constitutional directives and the actual state of affairs of dalits.

We are told the constitution directs that free and compulsory education must be provided for all children upto 14 years. It also directs that the nation prohibit and eliminate racial discrimination with regard to right to housing, public health, medical care, social security and social services, education and training.

And yet the reality is while there has been an overall decline in poverty for the general population there has been an alarming increase in poverty with the new economic policy and it is the dalits who are the most affected in this process.

When it comes to literacy and infant mortality the situation is no better. In spite of the fact that untouchability has been banned it continues to be the norm in all but the biggest cities. A study conducted in Karnataka reveal that dalits in villages still can not wear clothes or jewellery of their own choice; going against these unwritten code could be fatal. This situation is not unique to Karnataka but is applicable with equal validity to Andhra Pradesh, Tamilnadu and other *Bimaru* (Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa and Uttar Pradesh) states. The same is the case with regard to temple entry or participation in religious activities of the Indian society. The point to be noted here is that untouchability has been declared illegal. There is even a Prevention of Atrocities Act which imposes severe punishment on the offenders. The pity is that few people know such Acts exist and fewer still use it to defend the rights of victims of atrocities.

Even though the constitution declares that there shall be no concentration of wealth and means of production and everyone should have the

right to work, employment, congenial work conditions, protection against unemployment, slavery or bonded labour etc. the reality however is totally different. It is the upper caste people who are the land owners and the lower classes are generally the landless class! Even the surplus land has not been handed over to the dalits even though they are the tillers of the land.

Dalits still happen to be bonded labourers in many parts of our land. The innumerable loopholes that are there in the Bonded Labour (Abolition) Act are made use of by the landowners to harass the dalits. Landless labourers are forced to migrate in search of work in the lean season; they are exploited and they have no means of seeking justice anywhere. When the able bodied go out for work the women left behind at home are subject to sexual molestation. There are many accidental deaths because of dangerous conditions. Women who work are raped, sexually exploited and many fall into the clutches of brokers and end up as prostitutes with little scope for escape.

All over the country scavenging, toilet cleaning and sweeping are posts reserved exclusively for dalits. Ours happens to be still a feudal society where inequalities abound and there is rank injustice and discrimination based on gender, caste and creed. What hope is there for us if we enter the new millennium like this divided on all fronts and where many parts of the body politic are weak making the whole structure weak thereby? If the links are weak, how can the chain be strong? We need to know what legal standards are breached and human and constitutional rights are violated

when we deny dalits their basic human rights. Listed herebelow are a sample list which should serve as an eye opener to many of us.

The National Public Hearing organised in Chennai was intended

- to provide space for the Dalit victims of atrocities to depose their cases before the People's Court of the national and the International community.

- To give an opportunity to the national and international community to express their solidarity with the victims in the face of massive denials of their rights.

- To solicit support from the media for the purpose of creating and shaping public opinion against such atrocities and violence which are not in keeping with civilised and democratic norms of life.

- To provide platform for those who are concerned about upholding human rights.

- To bring to the minds of those obligated with the responsibility of maintaining law and order and dispensing justice in the democratic polity that it is their bounden duty and moral imperative to give easy access to rights victims in the State institutions, as for example the police stations and the human rights commissions.

- To impress forcefully on the minds of the dominant caste groups that the feudal character of caste and the practice of untouchability is today an anachronism in these changing times, and to remind them that fastidiously clinging on to this remnant of the past will result in a backlash from the op-

pressed communities in the event of the changing power relations being witnessed today.

This National Public Hearing has brought out a publication containing case studies which relate to the following areas of concern and right violations:

- *Various forms of untouchability practiced in different parts of the country.*

- *Manual scavenging*

- *Caste based discrimination in electoral politics*



- *State violence, especially by the law enforcement agencies, against the dalits*

- *The non-implementation of the SC/ST 9POA) Act, 1989 & Rules, 1995*

- *The functioning of the National SC/ST Commission for the protection and promotion of Dalit human rights.*

- *Atrocities/discrimination faced by Dalits with regard to land related issues.*

- *Dalit bonded labour.*

- *Issues related to the right to education for Dalits*

- *Atrocities faced by Dalit women.*

- *Caste violence unleashed against Dalits.*

- *Mass killings of Dalits and destruction to their properties and livelihood.*

- *Social boycott practiced against the Dalits by the dominant castes.*

- *Discrimination within the Christian community against Dalits.*

As one reads through the cases and listens to the voices of the victims, their voices convey cogent and telling messages:

- there is great awakening among the Dalits today regarding the unjust denial of their rights for centuries and consequently the demand for their speedy and effective restoration.

- Legitimate claims are made to a just share in the resources of the country and to equality in the matter of Dalits' rights to social, economic, educational, cultural and political advancement and mobility.

- Livelihood rights concerning housing, security, education, social interaction on equal terms; occupation according to one's choice; employment in reserved job vacancies; humane working conditions, etc., are asserted.

- Land title deeds and ownership of household properties are perceived to provide security and therefore, are placed as demands to be fulfilled.

- Equal participation in electoral processes and joining mainstream politics is considered crucial for social advancement.

- Speedy dispensation of justice from law enforcement agencies and the judiciary is expected. In other words, underlying almost all the instances of atrocities are the rumblings

for the restoration of Dalit rights.

• Consistent efforts are made by the dominant caste groups to suppress these rumblings, even to the extent of indulging in communal genocide by resorting to mass murders and destruction to properties and livelihood.

• The law enforcing agencies, instead of adhering to their responsibility of providing security, are often hand in glove with these dominant caste forces, nay even actively colluding with them in instances of mass massacres and destruction.

• No hope is lost despite the magnitude and the multiplicity of the atrocities. One can perceive the embers of this hope, sustained by the thirst for justice, still alive in the hearts of the victims. They look forward to the day when their case will be vindicated and they are quite certain about this. This hope underlines the enormous capacity of the victims to cling tenaciously to life and thus sustain themselves in the face of seemingly insurmountable obstacles during their quest for justice.

Legal Provisions Breached:

1. It is an offence to forcibly remove clothes from the person of a member of a Scheduled Caste or a Scheduled Tribe or parade him or her naked with painted face or body or commit any similar act which is derogatory to human dignity (sec.3 (1) (iii) SC/ST Act).

2. The practice of untouchability is a violation of Art. 17 of Indian Constitution.

3. It is an offence to give false or frivolous information to any public servant and thereby cause such public servant to use his lawful power to the injury or annoyance of a member of a Scheduled Caste or a Scheduled Tribe (sec. (3) (1) (ix) SC/ST Act).

4. Whoever, being a public servant but not being a member of a Scheduled Caste or Scheduled Tribe, willfully neglects his duties required to be per-

formed by him under this Act, is guilty of an offence under the Act. (sec. 4 SC/ST Act).

5. No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment (Art. 5 UDHR). (Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948)

6. Men and women of full age, without any limitation due to race, nationality or religion, have the right to marry and to found a family. They are entitled to equal rights as to marriage, during marriage and at its dissolution (Art. 16 (1) UDHR)

7. Untouchability is abolished. Its practice in any form is prohibited. Violators will be punished in accordance with the law (Art. 17 IC-FR & Art 18 UDHR). (Indian Constitution - Fundamental Rights)

8. No citizen shall, on the grounds of ..caste..., be subjected to any disability, liability, restriction or condition with regard to:- (b) the use of wells, tanks, bathing tanks, ghats, roads and places of public resort maintained wholly or partly out of the State funds or dedicated to the use of the public (Art.15 IC-FR).

9. A person, who is not a member of the Scheduled Castes or Scheduled Tribes communities, who denies a member of a Scheduled Caste or Scheduled Tribe any customary right of passage to a place of public resort or obstructs such member so as to prevent him/her from using or having access to a place of public resort to which other members of the public or any section thereof have a right to use or access to, is guilty of an offence under the Act (sec. 3 (1) (xiv) SC/ST Act).

10. Whoever voluntarily interferes or attempts to interfere with the free exercise of any electoral right commits the offence of undue influence at an election (sec. 171C IPC) where undue influence is exerted on a Scheduled Caste person, an offence is also committed under the SC/ST Act).

11. The use of insulting or abusive

language (such as caste names) against a member of the Scheduled Caste community is an offence under the Act (sec. 3 (1) (x) SC/ST Act).

12. Unlawful compulsory labour when deemed to be a practice of "untouchability:- Compelling a person, on the ground of "untouchability", to do scavenging or sweeping or to remove any carcass ... (sec. 7-A PCRA) (Protection of Civil Rights Act 1955)

13. No person shall (a) engage in or employ for or permit to be engaged in or employed for any other person for manually carrying human excreta or (b) construct or maintain a dry (non-flush) latrine (sec. 3 Employment of Manual Scavengers and Construction of Dry Latrines (Prohibition Act 1993).

14. Manual scavenging and the construction of dry latrines are prohibited and any person employing such labour shall be punished with imprisonment of up to one year and/or a fine of up to Rs.2000/= (sec. 14 Employment of Manual Scavengers and Construction of Dry Latrines (Prohibition Act 1993).

15. A person, who is not a member of the Scheduled Castes or Scheduled Tribes communities, who forces or intimidates a member of the Scheduled Caste or Scheduled Tribe not to vote or to vote for a particular candidate or to vote in any manner other than provided by law, is guilty of an offence under the Act (s. 3(1) (vii) SC/ST Act).

16. Promoting enmity between classes of people on the basis of race, caste ... in connection with an election is an offence (sec. 125 Representation of the People Act 1951).

17. Everyone should enjoy the right to life, liberty and security of person, and so no person shall be deprived of his/her life or personal liberty except according to procedure established by law (sec. 21 IC-FR; Art.3 UDHR & Art.6 ICCPR). (International Covenant of Civil and Political Rights 1966)

18. Intentionally insulting or intimidating with intent to humiliate a member of a Scheduled Caste in any place of public view, is an offence under the Act (s. 3 (1) (x) SC/ST Act).

19. Everyone has the right to an effective remedy by the competent national tribunals for acts violating the fundamental rights granted him by the constitution or law. (Art. 8 UDHR)

20. No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest or detention (Art.9 UDHR & Art. 9 ICCPR)

21. All persons are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to the equal protection of the law. (Art. 7 UDHR & Art. 26 ICCPR).

22. According to both national and international human rights law, everyone has the right to peaceful assembly, and in the dispersal of such assemblies, police have a duty to restrict the use of force or to restrict the use of force to the minimum extent necessary to control the situation (sec. 19 (2) (b) IC-fr & SEC. 129-131 Indian Code of Criminal Procedure; Art. 21 ICCPR).

23. Wrongful confinement of a person is an offence (sec. 340 IPC).

24. No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment (Art.5 UDHR & Art. ICCPR).

25. All citizens shall have the right to form associations (Art. 19 (1) (c) IC-FR; Art. 20 (1) UDHR & Art.22 ICCPR)

26. It is an offence for a person not belonging to the Scheduled Caste or Scheduled Tribe Community to assault or use force against any woman belonging to a Scheduled Caste or Scheduled Tribe with intent to dishonour or outrage her modesty. (Sec. 3 (xi) SC/ST Act).

27. All those deprived of their liberty shall be treated with humanity and with respect for the inherent dignity of the human person. (Art. 10 ICCPR).

28. All are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law (Art. 14 IC-FR; Art. 7 UDHR; Art. 14 ICCPR).

29. Wrongful occupation of land cultivated, owned by, allotted to or notified by any competent authority to be allotted to, a member of a Scheduled Caste or Scheduled Tribe. (sec. 3 (1) (iv) SC/ST Act)

30. Dispossession of a Scheduled Caste person from his land or premises. (sec. 3 (1) (v) SC/ST Act)

31. Forcing or causing a Scheduled Caste person to leave his house, village or other place of residence. (sec. 3 (1) (xv) SC/ST Act)

32. Committing mischief by fire with intention to cause destruction of any building used as a house dwelling or as a place of custody of the property by a Scheduled Caste person. (sec. 3 (2) (iv) SC/ST Act)

33. The bonded labour system is abolished and anyone enforcing bonded labour will be punished under the law (secs. 4 & 16 Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act 1976).

34. Advancement of a bonded debt is an offence punishable under the Act (sec. 17 Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act 1976).

35. It is the duty of the Government to make provision for the economic and social rehabilitation of the victims of atrocities. (sec. 21 (2) (iii) SC/ST Act)

36. The State shall make effective provision for securing the right to education to all citizens (Art. 45 IC-DP).

(Indian Constitution - Directive Principles)

37. The State shall promote with special care the educational interests of members of the Scheduled Caste community (Art. 46 IC-DP)

38. Everyone has the right to free and compulsory education, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Secondary (including technical and vocational), professional and higher education shall be generally made available and equally accessible to all. (Art. 26 UDHR; Art.13 ICESCR). (International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights 1966)

39. Rape is a criminal offence (sec. 376 IPC r/w sec. 3 (2) (v) SC/ST Act).

40. Any person who commits any offence under the Indian Penal Code punishable by imprisonment for a term of 10 years or more against a person or property on the ground that such person is a member of a Scheduled Caste or Scheduled Tribe, shall be punishable with imprisonment for life and with fine. (sec. 3 (2) (v) SC/ST Act).

41. Disobeying direction of law, intentional omission to apprehend accused, and willful neglect of duties required by law on the part of public servants. (secs. 217, 221 IPC r/w sec. 4 SC/ST Act)

42. State parties shall accord to women equality with men before law. (Art 15 (1) CEDAW)

43. Committing mischief by fire with intention to cause destruction of any building used as a house dwelling or as a place of custody of the property by a Scheduled Caste person. (sec. 3 (2) (iv) SC/ST Act)

Summer Family Conference for Pastors:

Pastors engaged in the hustle and bustle of ministry in the local churches were invited for 3 days of leisure and reflection at the Ecumenical Resource Centre, UTC, Bangalore from 9 - 11, May 2000. Twenty eight pastors with spouses and a few children attended the conference. The reflections were centred on the theme, *'The Pastors' Family; the Hope of the Community'*.

The Rt.Rev.Dr.J.W.Gladstone, Rev.Victor Joshua, Rev.Vinod Victor, Rev.C.V.Theodore and Mrs.Anne Rajkumar shared inputs for reflection. Exposure and orientation tour was organised for the team to Bangalore City,

Mysore Palace, Renganathittu Bird Sanctuary and Brindavan Gardens. Pastors returned to their parishes with fine memories of the conference.



The North Kerala Pastors Get-together

Bishop George Isaac and fifty pastors of North Kerala Diocese ventured to come to hot Chennai during 15 - 17, May 2000 for retreat. Though the climate was hot the retreat mood was lively with singing, Bible study, live discussions of the Mission and Ministry of the Church and in-

terface with the Bishop. The theme 'Healing Relationship' helped the pastors to assess their ministry from various angles. Rev.G.Dyvasirvadam inaugurated the retreat and Rt.Rev.Dr.Victor Premasagar, Rt.Rev.Dr.George Isaac, Mr.Frederick William, the Treasurer and Rev.G.Devakadasham served as facilitators for reflections. Rev.C.V.Theodore and Rev.Vinod Victor shared their Departments' vision with the pastors. An exposure

to the Chennai city and to the place of historical and ecclesiastical importance was also arranged. Pastors returned to the parishes refreshed.

*-Rev.G.Devakadasham
Director, PAD.*

REPORT OF THE CSI KERALA REGIONAL SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHER'S MEETING AT SANTHI GIRI

The Bishop Rt.Rev.Dr.George Isaac of the North Kerala Diocese in his inaugural speech at the CSI Kerala Regional Sunday School Teachers Meeting at Santhi Giri Ashram said that children were much influenced by the words and deeds of teachers. 75 participants represented the North, East, Madhya and South Kerala Dioceses of the CSI IN Kerala. Rev.P.P.Reginald welcomed the delegates to the camp.

Rev.P.J.Joseph Mani, Kerala Regional Coordinator and the Sunday School General Secretary of Madhya Kerala, Rev.Mathew George, Director of Santhi Giri gave felicitations on the occasion.

In the afternoon session Rev.Vinod Victor gave a talk on 'Trends and Problems of S.S. ministry'. He said that

S.S. students should be personally understood and recognised. Rev.Kurian Peter spent some time in teaching some choruses. Participants got a chance to hear about the activities going in S.S. in

terms in communication. Prof. Varghese Chandy said that if only we had a vision we could reach the goal. Children need security and this could be achieved only with love.



Sri. Joseph Mani, Coordinator of the Kerala Regional S.S. presented a paper on 'Building the Diocesan Department of Sunday Schools.

The Holy Communion was celebrated by Rev.L.J.Samjees and Rev.Y.John William when Rev.P.I. Job brought the message. He made a call to the S.S. Teachers to become teachers of the Master Teacher.

the four dioceses from the respective S.S. office bearers. Rev.Dr.Kuruvilla Jacob, KUT Seminary took a class on 'Teaching and learning experience in S.S. He stressed the importance of communication. Sunday School classes should be held in a friendly atmosphere and took pains to explain the different

Rev.B.D.Prasada Rao, explained the activities of the Synod Department of Christian Education. Sri. M.J. Wilson, the S.S. worker of the North Kerala and the Convener of the camp expressed thanks for all those who helped and participated in the camp.

BREAKTHROUGH 2000

A one day youth conference of the Karnataka Central Diocese was organised at the Hudson Memorial Hall, Bangalore on Saturday 8th of April 2000. The Bishop Rt. Rev. Vasantha Kumar inaugurated the conferences attended by about 400 young people representing the various congregations of the diocese. Apart from the cultural presentations there was also a video presentation of the burning problems of the people of the Kolar region as a result of the closure of the Bharat Gold Mines Ltd. The youth offered their solidarity with their suffering brethren of the Kolar region. The Synod Youth Secretary gave the key note address.

YOUTH RETREATS WITH TAIZE

Brother Ghislain of the TAIZE Community helped the CSI youth with two one day Retreats which enabled the youngsters to experience a spiritual encounter with a difference. About 300 young people gathered together for the Retreat at the Epiphany Cathedral at Dornakal on 13th April. The Rt. Rev. A. Rajaratnam, Bishop in Dornakal inaugurated the Conference.

The second Retreat was held at the St. George's Cathedral, Chennai where 200 invited young people from the Diocese and other ecumenical youth participated.

MISSION FESTIVAL, VIJAYAWADA

As part of the mammoth Mission festival organised in Vijayawada a special youth programme was organised on 5th of May 2000 at the Bishop Azariah School Compound, Vijayawada. Youngsters in large numbers attended the Special Youth Meet. The Synod Youth Secretary delivered the message. There was a cultural presentation of the young people at the meet.

EXPOSURE VISITS

Miss. Anzitta Brimble Maben of the

Karnataka Southern Diocese and Mr. J. Justin of the Tirunelveli Diocese represented the CSI Youth at the International Methodist Students Conference held at Bath in London in April 2000. About her experience Anzitta writes:

"I had a wonderful time in England, which will be embedded in memory for years to come (Thanks to you). I was a little nervous before going, scared I'll be stopped some where in custom's but thank God I finally made it to England.

Next morning sister Sarah picked us up (Justin and me) and dropped us in Kingswood school, she even gave me shoes

stay immensely. But the only trouble I had was my taste buds could not adjust itself to the British food. Their food was very bland. As I was use to eating very spicy and salty food. I had a little trouble adjusting and everything was new and interesting.

I visited most of London places with one-day bus, but avoided seeing anything with ticket in it. The place is very expensive; food cost not less than 2 pound for a simple food. the weather was very cold and extremely freezing, I enjoyed it. Everyone was concerned about my well being, b'coz one look at me they knew, I wasn't used to that climate."

Mr. Jeremiah Anderson of Vellore Diocese and Mr. Robert Sunil of the Krishna Godavari Diocese represented the CSI Youth at the Summer Course of the Henry Martyn Institute, Hyderabad held at Darjeeling. Reflecting on his experiences, Mr. Robert Sunil writes: "Learning on Meditation in the scenic grandeur of Darjeeling was indeed an elevating experience".

Miss. Meriba Wilson of Kanyakumari Diocese is back from TAIZE in

France after spending 3 months with them. She also had the privilege of representing the CSI Youth at the International Youth Gathering held at Warsaw in Poland on the millennium eve.

A group of six youngsters led by Mr. Patrick Abraham from the Nandyal Diocese spent four weeks in Germany visiting different Churches and Youth groups there.

The others who are selected for the forthcoming meetings are, Mr. Samuel Sudhir and Mrs. Grace Patricia Malini for the EMS Youth Consultation to be held at Minahatta, Indonesia in July 2000. Miss. Preethi Selwyn of Karnataka Central Diocese will represent the CSI Youth at the CCA General Assembly at Tomohon in Indonesia in June, 2000. Miss. Anzitta will be a Steward at the same meeting. Mr. Shyam Sunder of the Dornakal Diocese and Mr. G. K. Sunil of South Kerala Diocese will spend 3 months in TAIZE, France, later this year on an exposure visit.



and coats to cover me up, b'coz it was sooooo... cold I was shivering and cluttering.

We had a wonderful, informative session; it was basically on the "youth's" that is the youth's activity in church from various countries. We had base group discussion, which gave us enough time to talk about each country's, its church in detail.

After lot of discussion we drew to a conclusion that the pastor must have a good friendly relationship with the youth so that the youth feel wanted and develop interest, that the message should be given in an innovative way.

We had a nice evening with famous guitarist with his excellent music, they also taught Welsh dance, we had a cultural night where I danced for "Rang De" and believe me, which I myself find hard to do, they applauded!

I made a lot of friends and enjoyed my



Keep Looking Out For the Festivity

Church of South India Synod Youth Festival 2000

Dates : 2 - 5 November 2000

Venue : Kasam (New Springs), Diocese of Vellore

Theme : "Lord, Make Us Channels of Your Peace"

A gala get-together of over 2000 youngsters of the Church of South India

100 youth from each diocese

Teenagers, Boys and Girls, Young Pastors and

International and Ecumenical Youth Visitors

Cultural Fest and Sports Meet

Inter-Diocesan Volley Ball Tournament

Mock Synod Session

Lots and Lots More on the anvil

Keep watching out for further details

Continue saving for your travel expenses



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